

Washington communities profit from fish, wildlife recreation

Summertime is money-making time for Larry Gillis.

As the owner of a convenience store in the small community of Asotin next to the Snake River, Gillis says ice, beer, pop and snack foods go out the door by the caseload when the anglers and other outdoor enthusiasts arrive along with the warm weather.

But Gillis' cash register doesn't stop ringing with the end of summer. As the days get shorter and the weather turns cooler, a popular steelhead fishery helps keep merchandise moving well into the fall and winter months.

And a spring salmon fishery recently developed by state fisheries managers is boosting business even more, he says.

"It's not as big as the steelheading," Gillis notes, "but give it time."

Gillis is one of thousands of business owners throughout Washington who depend on the state's recreational fishers, hunters and wildlife viewers to make a living.

From Three Rivers Marine in Woodinville, which sold several million dollars worth of fishing boats and motors last year, to Clark's All Sports in Colville, where hunters often shell out \$300 to \$400 a visit, merchants say these recreationists are essential to their businesses.

Nowhere is the economic importance of fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing more evident than in rural communities. Civic leaders say spending by people pursuing these activities plays a major role in keeping many businesses in these com-

munities solvent, particularly as timber, mining and other traditional industries have declined.

"Without question, the

who for the past 15 years has served as mayor of the small town of Pateros in Okanogan County. Even a single fishery, such as the



Recreational spending for fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing in Washington state, 2001

Total: \$2.18 billion

**Wildlife viewing
\$980 million**

**Fishing
\$854 million**

**Hunting
\$350 million**

Figures include total trip-related and equipment expenditures.

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service



Fishers, hunters and wildlife watchers spend more than \$2 billion annually in Washington state.

majority of people who visit this part of the state are seeking some kind of outdoor adventure—whether it's fishing, hunting or wildlife viewing," says Leroy Tipton, president of the Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce. "Together, the tourism generated by those outdoor activities is a major component of our area economy."

Fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing "definitely have a major impact on our businesses and community," says Gail Howe,

fall 2002 upper Columbia River steelhead fishery, can provide a giant boost to that town's handful of merchants, she says.

Numbers recently compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in a nationwide survey underscore the economic importance of fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing to the state.

According to the USFWS figures, recreational fishers spent \$854 million in 2001 in Washington pursuing species such as salmon,

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Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Sound Stewardship of Washington's Fish and Wildlife

Adding it up

Communities profit *continued...*

steelhead, trout, crab and clams, placing the state eighth nationally in expenditures by anglers.

By the state's own estimates, the 2001 Columbia River spring chinook fishery alone generated \$15.4 million in spending, while the coastal razor clam fishery generated \$4.6 million.

The same USFWS study estimated that Washington's hunters spent \$350 million during 2001 to pursue deer, elk, grouse, black bears, pheasants, ducks and 45 other game species. Deer hunters, the largest group of hunters, spent \$111 million in communities as diverse as Kettle Falls in the northeast area of the state to Vancouver in the southwest.

"About 80 percent of our business is directly related to fishing and hunting," says Bob Schlecht, owner of Bob's Sporting Goods in Longview.

Adds Bryan Nelson, a salesman at Three Rivers Marine in Woodinville: "The amount of business we do correlates directly to the salmon and steelhead fisheries that open up in area rivers. If there are fishing opportunities, [the angler] is going to go. And he's going to buy a boat and a trailer and gear and food, beer, ice, everything."

But fishers and hunters are only part of the story.

The USFWS reports that 2.5 million wildlife viewers spent \$980 million in Washington state in 2001 on various goods ranging from binoculars and bird feeders to guide books and galoshes. The report ranks Washington seventh nationally in spending for wildlife viewing.

This comes as no surprise to the growing number of entrepreneurs responding to the increasing popularity of eco-tourism in Washington state by creating annual fish and wildlife festivals in their local communities.

In 1969, there was one major festival in Washington—the Issaquah Salmon Days. Today, there are at least a dozen festivals, nine of which have been launched since 1990 in communities all over the state from Ocean Shores to Othello.

Festival organizers point out that the festivals boost tourism and quite often become an important part of the overall economic fabric of a community.

"Our motel rooms, restaurants and retail stores are full of salmon festival goers," says Leavenworth motel owner Lyman Boyd, referring to the annual Wenatchee River Salmon Festival.

"We get a lot of people coming to watch eagles here, people from all over Puget Sound as well as from other countries," says Cheri Cook-Blodgett, organizer of the Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival.

As the state agency responsible for managing the state's native fish and wildlife resources, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) works with civic and business leaders and citizens to promote wildlife viewing—as well as fishing and hunting opportunities—in their communities.

While the Department's first responsibility is to conserve the state's fish and wildlife resources, state law also directs WDFW to maximize recreational game fishing and hunting opportunities for all citizens.

To meet these mandates, the Department's science-based management programs engage in a variety of activities to insure fish and wildlife populations are healthy and sustainable, and that the recreational opportunities that they provide are predictable.



"One of our most important jobs in the years ahead will be to work even more closely with civic leaders, business groups and citizens to find ways to expand predictable recreational opportunities consistent with sound, scientifically-based resource management."

Jeff Koenings, PhD.

Director

Washington Department
of Fish and Wildlife

"Without this combination of sound science and solid management, the recreational opportunities provided by the state's fish and wildlife resources would simply disappear," says WDFW Director Jeff Koenings, PhD.

"This is true whether we're talking about fishing for salmon along the banks of the Skagit River, or hunting for pheasants in the Yakima Valley," Koenings adds. "The opportunities we see year after year—whether it's in fishing, hunting or wildlife viewing—are the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of highly-trained resource professionals."

One example of this is the Department's operation of the state's hatchery system. Hatcheries now provide about 70 percent of the fish caught in Puget Sound, and about 95 percent of the fish caught on the Columbia River.

Besides the operation of hatcheries, the Department participates in a host of other activities that provide economic benefits to citizens and their communities.

These activities include:

- Stocking hundreds of lakes statewide with trout and other warmwater species to provide fishing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of anglers.
- Working with local governments and citizen groups to expand fish and wildlife viewing areas and opportunities.
- Increasing hunting opportunities, most recently by establishing separate seasons for muzzleloader, archery and modern firearm hunts.
- Structuring the time and place of certain fisheries to maximize economic benefits to communities.
- Providing citizen access to the state's popular waterways by overseeing 600 aquatic access sites statewide.
- Promoting citizen participation in hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing by routinely publicizing opportunities through video and print products, and sponsoring outreach and education programs, including youth fishing and hunting clinics.
- Protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife habitat to support healthy populations available for fishing, hunting and viewing.

In recent years, the Department has also undertaken a number of new initiatives to help meet its legislative mandate to provide recreational opportunities. By mass-marking salmon produced at hatcheries, for example, fisheries managers can now establish fishing seasons that allow anglers to take advantage of abundant hatchery runs so long as they release unmarked wild fish unharmed.

These marked selective fisheries, more than 50 of which have been created over the past four years, have generated tremendous benefits for small communities along the coast and the Columbia River, according to business owners and municipal officials.

"We have entered an era of salmon fisheries far different from the fisheries we experienced in the past," Koenings said. "By merging our science with new techniques, and by working closely with those communities which stand to gain the most, we are shaping sustainable salmon fisheries that can provide both jobs and tax dollars."

Koenings says the Department is aware how its actions—whether the issue is fishing, hunting or wildlife viewing—can affect the economic well-being of a business. This is particularly true for small businesses, which number 185,000 statewide, placing Washington in the top 10 nationally.

Koenings says one of the Department's most important jobs in the years ahead will be to work even more closely with business groups, civic leaders and citizens, to find ways to expand predictable recreational opportunities in their communities.

"We have an obligation not only to build on the relationships we've already established, but to create new ones," Koenings says. "It's no exaggeration to say that many businesses in many communities are depending on these relationships to prosper."

From Neah Bay to Ilwaco, salmon seasons boost fortunes

After a decade of poor salmon runs and mounting fishing restrictions, anglers flocked to the Washington coast in 2001 to take advantage of the best coho salmon run in a decade. By the time the season ended in September, they had taken three times as many fishing trips – and caught four times as many salmon – as the average for the previous five years.

And a banner run of chinook salmon in 2002 brought them back again.

“People who haven’t fished for a long time are coming back and newcomers are finding out what fishing is all about,” says Mark Cedergreen, executive director of the Westport Charterboat Association. “That’s great for the charter industry and it’s great for the city of Westport.”

In fact, businesses and whole communities up and down the coast have benefited immensely from the recent rebound in salmon fishing – made possible by a combination of improving ocean conditions and new fishing techniques that allow more hatchery fish to be caught without jeopardizing efforts to protect weak, wild stocks.

According to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, which sets coast-wide fishing seasons, personal income in coastal towns from Ilwaco to Neah Bay climbed to more than \$9 million in 2001 – nearly triple the average of the previous five years. In Westport, hotel/motel tax receipts jumped 25 percent in 2001, which one county official says was due “almost exclusively to the strong salmon fishery” that year.

Kathleen Sayce, an officer for ShoreBank Pacific, says the influx of anglers has brought a “new energy” on Ilwaco’s waterfront the past several years. “Just about every building on the waterfront is being repaired or renovated in one way or another,” says Sayce, who monitors natural resource trends for ShoreBank.

Work orders for boat maintenance and repair “took a big bump” in 2001 and have been climbing ever since. “We’ve got some momentum going and it’s helping put people back to work on the docks,” says Mack Funk, manager of the Port of Ilwaco.

For Cheri Bentler, good salmon seasons mean fewer vacancies at The Cape motel and RV park, which she and her husband, Gordy, own and operate in Neah Bay.

“It has definitely helped us keep our units full,” Bentler says. “The salmon season accounts for a big part of our business, so we’ve definitely noticed the difference.”

Coastal residents recognize that any good fortune brought about by fishing can be cyclical. Poor fishing conditions in the 1990s took a heavy toll on boat operators, forcing them to

diversify by running charters for halibut, sturgeon and other species to stay in business. Many now offer whale-watching trips and other sightseeing tours during the off-season.

“But salmon is still king” in the coastal communities, says Cedergreen. “That’s what gets people excited.”

Recognizing that fact, Dan Leinan approached state fisheries officials about creating a special fall fishery off the mouth of the Quillayute River near La Push. As city clerk-treasurer for nearby Forks, Leinan and other area boosters hoped to sponsor a fishing derby that would attract anglers and help stimulate the area economy.

State fisheries managers agreed to shift a small portion of the La Push area’s summer salmon quota to later in the year to support the initiative.

“We had 140 entrants in our first year – enough to break even – and we’re hoping for more every year,” says Leinan. “Obviously, this fishery isn’t going to make or break this community, but tourism is very important to this area and it could help take the edge off layoffs in the timber industry.”



Westport attracts thousands of visitors every year with recreational opportunities ranging from salmon fishing to whale watching.



Eagles, bird watchers attract entrepreneurs in Skagit, Grand Coulee areas

Every winter, hundreds of bald eagles congregate along the banks of the Skagit River, roosting in the tall cottonwood and fir trees and feeding on spawning salmon.

But the eagles aren't alone. Along with the birds come the tourists, thousands of them, hoping to get a close-up glimpse of the national symbol.

"We get a lot of out-of-town people coming to watch the eagles here, people from all over the Puget Sound and from other countries as well," says Cheri Cook-Blodgett. "It's really busy along the river for a few days, which is quite a contrast to the rest of the winter."

Since 1987, Cook-Blodgett and the residents of the towns of Rockport, Darrington and Marblemount have teamed up to stage the Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival and capitalize on the influx of eagle watchers. The three-day festival, held each February, draws a throng of visitors who come to view the birds and take in the festivities.

"There's strictly eagle viewing on the Skagit River during that time of the year," Cook-Blodgett explains. "The North Cascades Pass is closed because of snow every winter, and we wind up at the end of a dead-end road. We would get very little or no traffic through the area without the eagles and the festival."

"With the festival, we fill up all the businesses for a few days in the middle of winter, which is something that wouldn't happen if we didn't put it on."

Festival organizers say they are hoping to expand on their success by attracting tourists to their community at times other than when the festival is staged. To that end, they recently spearheaded the construction of a visitor's interpretive center and staffed it with trained people to help answer questions about eagles and the area.

The center, built in conjunction with the Rockport fire hall, is open from mid-December through mid-February, five days a week.

"We don't want people to come up here for just one weekend of the festival and never spend any other part of the winter months in the area," says Cook-Blodgett.

Some 200 miles away, in the eastern Washington town of Grand Coulee, Tim Alling is hoping to duplicate the success of the Skagit festival.

In February 2002, Alling, who runs Kings Court RV Park and serves as president of the local Chamber of Commerce, started the Grand Coulee Balde Eagle Festival to showcase the bald eagles, raise awareness about their habitat needs, and promote the natural beauty of the Grand Coulee area.

He's also hoping that, in time, the festival attracts tourists.

"We started slow, without much advertising, because we didn't want to be overwhelmed," Alling says. "So the first year we had only about 120 visitors. But it was amazing how you could feel the excitement in the community. And it did bring in a few extra dollars to town."

Grand Coulee's three-day event included bald eagle art, as well as photo and poetry contests. Future years will bring expanded activities, according to Alling.

"We're looking to grow in the same manner that the Othello Sandhill Crane Festival has," he says.

With nearly 2.5 million wildlife watchers over age 16, Washington is first in the Northwest and among the nation's top 10 states in spending by viewers.

Expenditures for wildlife-watching activities, by state where activity took place, 2001

1)	California	\$	2.6 billion
2)	Florida	\$	1.6 billion
3)	New York	\$	1.4 billion
4)	Wisconsin	\$	1.3 billion
5)	Texas	\$	1.3 billion
6)	New Jersey	\$	1.2 billion
7)	Washington	\$	980 million
8)	Pennsylvania	\$	962 million
9)	Maryland	\$	863 million
10)	North Carolina	\$	827 million

Source: United States Fish and Wildlife Service



Bird watchers flock to the Skagit Valley each winter to witness the annual arrival of trumpeter swans, tundra swans and snow geese.



Fishers, hunters keep motels, campgrounds humming in southwest Washington

Seven months ago, Jerry Lorenz, owner of the Shade Tree Motel in the tiny town of Glenwood in southwest Washington, did what most small business owners only dream of doing.

The Klickitat County resident made the last bank payment on his business.

“I started out buying an old service station, then I added the restaurant, then the store, then the motel,” says Lorenz. “It’s all sweat equity.”

“If it weren’t for the Cowlitz River, we would be gone—99 percent of our business comes from that river.”

Don Glaser, owner
Barrier Dam Campground

Sweat equity – and dollars from fishers and hunters, who as regular customers of the Shade Tree Motel account for 15 percent of Lorenz’s total annual gross revenues.

“When you’re in a small community like this one you really depend on repeat business,” Lorenz says. “Ninety percent of my business is repeat business. I have a lot of loyalty.”

Lorenz says good steelhead and salmon fishing the past couple of years on the Klickitat River has attracted a large number of fishers to his business, including a good number of people from out of state.

“I have one guy who comes in from Ohio to fish and brings a guide and stays a week,” Lorenz says. “The guide probably costs him \$300 a day, but he doesn’t care.”

While the fishers are good for business, Lorenz says, hunters are even better. Indeed, last year, elk hunting was downright great for his cash flow, he says. “I did \$2,000 a day in business for a two-week period during elk season.”

At the Barrier Dam Campground in Salcum, Don Glaser echoes Lorenz when talking about the importance of hunting and fishing dollars to his own business.



Glaser started his Lewis County campground and grocery store about 15 years ago. Besides himself and his wife, he employs three or four other people during the busy season. The last two years, he says, have been the best ever for his business due to the high number of anglers drawn to Cowlitz River for the good fishing.

“If it weren’t for the Cowlitz River, we would be gone—99 percent of our business comes from that river,” Glaser says. “If you took the fishing out, a lot of us here along Highway 12 would be done for.”

Besides people from Seattle and Portland, Glaser says the Barrier Dam Campground routinely plays host to people from out-of-state, including travelers from Texas, California, Idaho, Montana and Canada.

The majority come for the steelhead and salmon fisheries which, if everything goes right, can start in March and last all the way through November or early December.

“When the fisheries start up here,” Glaser says, “it’s unreal.”

Many small businesses cater to anglers and hunters. Washington is one of the nation’s top 10 states for small businesses, with 185,000 located here.

Source: Seattle Times

Washington ranks among the nation’s top 10 states in spending by sport fishers

1) Florida	\$ 4 billion
2) California	\$ 2 billion
3) Texas	\$ 1.9 billion
4) Minnesota	\$ 1.3 billion
5) North Carolina	\$ 1.11 billion
6) New York	\$ 1.1 billion
7) Wisconsin	\$ 1 billion
8) Washington	\$ 854 million
9) Michigan	\$ 839 million
10) Ohio	\$ 762 million

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service





Hunters big spenders in Colville, Spokane, Kennewick

Ray Clark has sold gear to fishers and hunters at his Colville store for more than 20 years. And of the two groups of customers, he says, there's no comparison—hunters are the big spenders.

"A fisherman might spend \$50," says Clark, proprietor of Clark's All Sports. "But a hunter will drop \$300 to \$400 here in a day."

Clark and others say hunting is still a way of life in Colville and throughout northeast Washington. The number of households with licensed hunters is high, and success rates among hunters are estimated to be among the highest in the state. Altogether, hunters in 2001 spent an estimated \$350 million statewide on goods and services.

"We'll sell \$10,000 worth of deer hunting licenses and tags the day before the opening of the season alone," Clark says.

"We've been hugely successful in eastern Washington, and one reason is because hunting is big here."

Jeremy Sage, manager
Sportsman's Warehouse

"We've been hugely successful in eastern Washington, and one reason is because hunting is big here," Sage says.

To hear Clark tell it, it's not just world-class whitetail deer and other big-game hunting opportunities that attract hunters to the northeast part of the state and keep cash registers ringing. Turkey hunting also has been a big draw, he says.

When the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife increased the number of Stevens County fall turkey permits from 300 in 2001 to 1,000 in 2002, hunters flocked to Clark's store to apply and gear up.

"It's an exciting atmosphere here right before any of these hunting season openers," Clark says. "It's part of life in this community."

None of that comes as a surprise to Jeremy Sage, manager of the Sportsman's Warehouse retail store which opened in Spokane in August 2001.

Sage says his company, which operates similar stores in Kennewick and other states, looked at sales of hunting and fishing licenses in eastern Washington before deciding to open for business. Both Spokane and the Tri-Cities measured up as good bets.



Farmers, bird watchers team up at Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Dick Erickson isn't quite sure when the farmers started getting into the act at the annual Othello Sandhill Crane Festival.

But he does know they have now become indispensable.

"The bird experts leading the tours kept getting so many questions about the local farming operations that we started putting a farmer on each tour," says Erickson, the festival's organizer.

"It really works out well because the local farmers usually know where the birds are before anyone else anyway."

Now in its sixth year, the Central Washington spring festival started as a day-long event that drew about 400 people, most of them avid bird watchers.

"Since the festival has gained some acclaim, there's been spin-off business in the community."

Dick Erickson, organizer
Othello Sandhill Crane Festival

Today, it is a two-and-a-half day community-wide celebration attended by more than 1,400 people from all walks of life who provide the town and adjacent areas with an economic boost by filling up lodging facilities and restaurants.

The stars of the show, of course, are the cranes—gawky, prehistoric-looking birds that routinely make a stop in Othello's cornfields and a nearby wildlife refuge on their annual migration north.

In a typical year, about 25,000 of the birds visit the area. And with the birds come the tourists in buses and vans. The vehicles can be seen snaking their way along the back roads, their occupants hoping for a close-up glimpse of the cranes. Various experts provide tourists with talks not only about the birds, but the geology and history of the area as well.

Erickson says local businesses have embraced the festival and the annual influx of visitors it brings to the area. Othello's two motels fill up quickly for festival weekend, giving those in nearby Moses Lake an opportunity to pick up the overflow. Restaurants and other food vendors also do a thriving business.

"It's become a whole family and whole community event," Erickson says.

Since the birds are in the area for about six weeks, Erickson notes many people visit before and after the festival, too. "Since the festival has gained some acclaim, there's been spin-off business in the community," he says. "Nothing you could put a dollar figure to, but definitely an influx."



Wildlife viewing festivals celebrate annual migrations and viewing opportunities. At least a dozen festivals, most launched within the last decade, draw viewers and visitors to communities all over Washington.



Wildlife Viewing Festivals

Issaquah Salmon Days	Started 1969
OysterFest, Shelton	1981
Upper Skagit Eagle Festival, Concrete/Rockport/Marblemount	1987
Wenatchee River Salmon Festival, Leavenworth	1990
Open Yard – Bird Fair, Spokane County	1990
Salmon Homecoming, Seattle	1992
Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival	1994
Sturgeon Festival, Vancouver	1997
Othello Sandhill Crane Festival	1998
Walla Walla Festival of Foliage and Feathers	1998
Bird Fest, Ridgefield	2000
Grand Coulee Balde Eagle Festival	2002

Fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing mean business in Washington



Dan Leinan
FORKS

"Tourism is very important to the area and the fall fishery in La Push is part of that."

Dan Leinan, City Treasurer
Forks



Shiela McCartan
GRAYS HARBOR

"People are in town for the entire Shorebird Festival, staying in the hotels, eating in local restaurants and making other purchases while they are here."

Sheila McCartan, organizer
Grays Harbor Shorebird Festival

Butch Smith
ILWACO



"As long as we can fish for salmon and sturgeon we should be in business."

Butch Smith, director
Ilwaco Charter Association



Jim Norris
PORT TOWNSEND

"Our customers are excited about exploring Washington's marine environment."

Jim Norris, owner
Marine Resources Consultants (eco-tourism cruises)



Cheri Cook-Blodgett
CONCRETE

"We get people from all over Puget Sound and from other countries as well coming to watch the eagles here."

Cheri Cook-Blodgett, organizer
Upper Skagit Bald Eagle Festival

Bryan Nelson
WOODINVILLE



"The amount of business we do correlates directly to the salmon and steelhead fishing in the area's rivers."

Bryan Nelson, salesman
Three Rivers Marine

Mike Meseberg
POTHOLES RESERVOIR



"When the fish are here, business is unbelievable."

Mike Meseberg, owner
MarDon Resort



Pat Heenan
MAZAMA

"The Methow's hunting, fishing and wildlife watching are all definitely part of the draw for our business."

Pat Heenan, owner
Burnt Finger Barbeque and Steakhouse



Ray Clark
COLVILLE

"Hunting is definitely big business here."

Ray Clark, owner,
Clark's All Sports

Gail Howe
PATEROS



"Fishers, hunters and wildlife watchers have a major impact on our businesses and our community."

Gail Howe, mayor
Pateros

Lyman Boyd
LEAVENWORTH



"Our motel rooms, restaurants and retail stores are full of Wenatchee Salmon Festival goers."

Lyman Boyd, owner
Linderhoff Motor Inn

Jamey Layman
SPOKANE



"The Bighorn Outdoor Adventure Show is a key place for businesses to connect to their clientele."

Jamey Layman, executive director,
Inland Northwest Wildlife Council

Bev Shuyler
SELAH



"Some fishers and hunters follow the outdoor show circuit all around the state."

Bev Shuyler, co-organizer
Central Washington Sportsmen Show

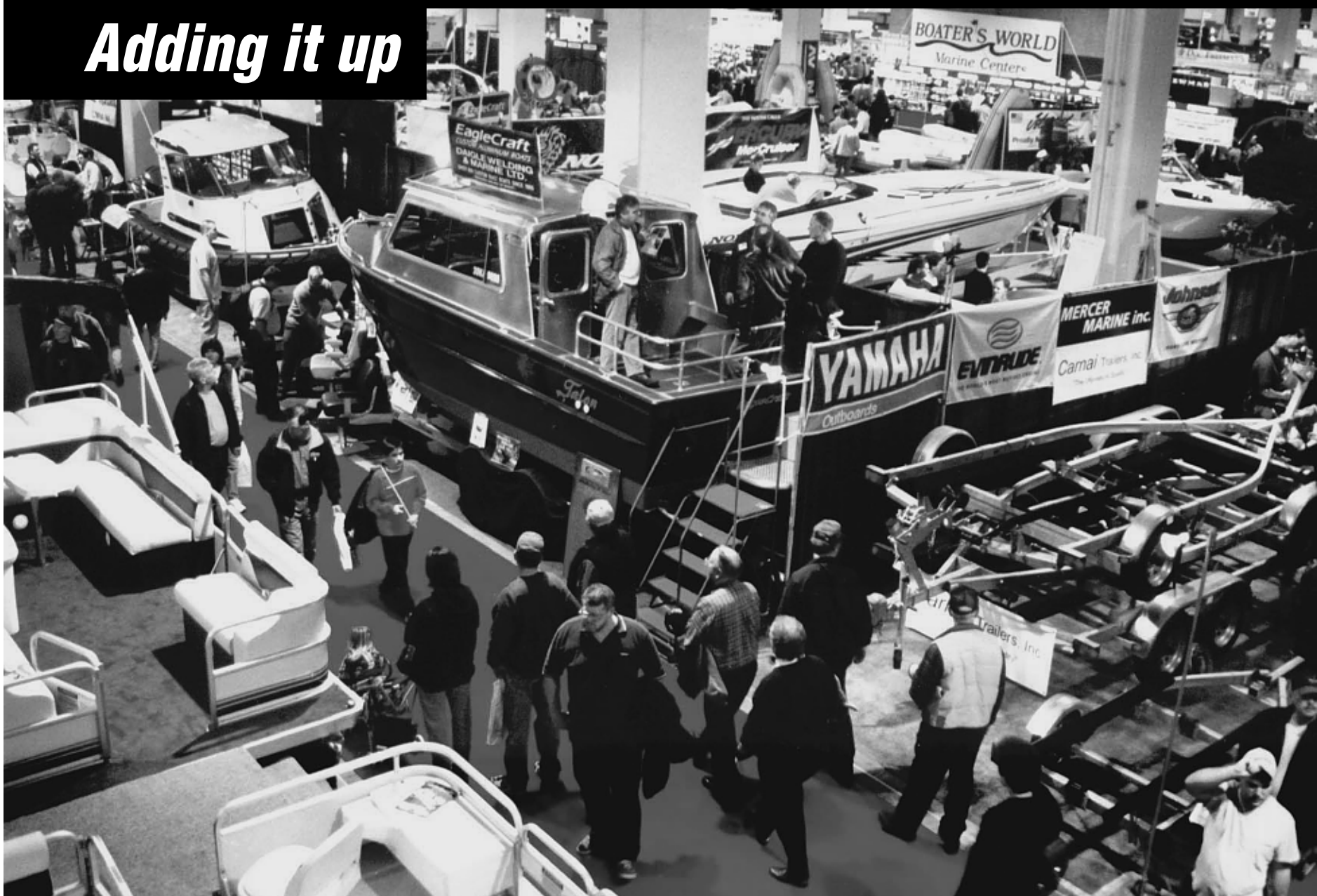
Timothy Bishop
WALLA WALLA



"The Festival of Foliage and Feathers raises our tourism profile."

Timothy Bishop, Executive Director,
Downtown Walla Walla Foundation

Adding it up



Outdoor shows bring vendors together with hunters, fishers

Bev and Merle Shuyler of Selah love the outdoors. And when they lived in Spokane, they loved to go to the Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show, the second-oldest outdoor show in Washington and one that regularly draws large crowds during its four-day run. That led to a decision by the Shuylers in 1990 to start the Central Washington Sportsmen Show in Yakima and, three years later, the Tri-Cities Sportsmen Show.

Today, the annual, three-day shows each draw at least 10,000 people and provide potential customers for up to 130 vendors of fishing, hunting and camping equipment.

“Some fishermen and hunters follow the sportsmen show circuit all around the state,” says Bev Shuyler, referring to the eight major outdoor shows, including their own, held each year across Washington.

“That’s really why we started the Tri-Cities show,” she says. “Our Yakima show was drawing Tri-Cities folks.”

Besides vendors catering to the shopping needs of hunters and fishers, the two shows typically include seminars by professional fishers, kids’ activities, demonstrations by local bird hunting dog clubs, outdoor photography contests and much more.

“We try to have something for everyone in the family,” Bev Shuyler explains. “Ours is a family business.”

While the Shuylers have been very successful, they have a way to go to match the size of the Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show, which is held each year in Spokane.

That show, launched in 1958 by the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council, typically draws 34,000-plus visitors during its four-day run. In 2001, 230 vendors of outdoor recreation goods and services each spent \$500 to more than \$5,000 on booth space to reach the show’s attendees.

“Many of these businesses have been coming to the Big Horn show for more than 20 years.”

Jamey Layman, executive director
Inland Northwest Wildlife Council

Businesses large and small flock to annual shows to sell their wares to fishers and hunters

Seattle Boat Show	Started 1947
Big Horn Outdoor Adventure Show, Spokane	1958
Seattle Boat Show at Shishole Bay Marina	1972
Seattle Sportsmen’s Show	1975
Northwest Gamefish Show, Spokane	1985
Yakima Sportsmens Show	1990
Tri-Cities Sportsmens Show	1993
Puyallup Sportsmen’s Show	1996

According to Jamey Layman, executive director of the council, gear manufacturers typically fare best at the show. Boats and four-wheelers also sell well. Some hunting, fishing and whitewater rafting guides sell out their entire season at the show, he says.

“Many of these businesses have been coming to the show for more than 20 years,” Layman says. “The Big Horn has become a key place for them to connect with the clientele they’ve developed. You know they wouldn’t be shelling out this kind of cash if they weren’t making it all, and much more, back.”

Wenatchee salmon festival draws crowds, dollars

From its beginning 12 years ago, Lyman Boyd knew the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival was going to be big.

“Chelan County is ground zero for politically-charged salmon recovery issues,” says Boyd, who owns the Linderhoff Motor Inn in Leavenworth and serves on the local Chamber of Commerce board.

“No matter what side of the issue you’re on, salmon are interesting to many, many people.”

Boyd was right. While the festival started out slow, the four-day event now attracts several thousand visitors annually to the area and pumps hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy.

“Our motel rooms, restaurants and retail stores are full of salmon festival goers,” Boyd says, adding that the event makes Leavenworth a destination place on the weekend it is held.

What draws tourists to the festival and the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, where it



is headquartered, are the wild summer chinook that make their way up the Wenatchee River to spawn in late September.

In addition to the fish, festival goers are treated to salmon barbecues, Native American history and cultural exhibits, an animal costume parade and other attractions, according to festival director Corky Broaddus of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal agency that operates the hatchery.

Organizers say that while it is hard to

pinpoint just how much the festival means economically, the area’s 1,500 motel rooms sell out on festival weekend, infusing an estimated \$300,000 into the community.

“The key has been the fish hatchery,” Boyd says. “People don’t always think of a fish hatchery as part of the local tourism economy, but the folks who run this one recognize the importance of public exposure. Even our summer theater group stages all its productions on the hatchery grounds.”

In Walla Walla, it’s botany and birds

Five years after its inception, Walla Walla’s annual four-day celebration of birds and the arrival of autumn is still relatively small.

And that’s just fine, thank you.

“Part of the festival’s smallness is intentional,” says Timothy Bishop, executive director of the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation and chief organizer for the town’s Fall Festival of Foliage and Feathers.

“Most of the tours have a maximum of 12 or 15 persons to ensure a quality experience and to avoid disturbing wildlife and its habitat,” Bishop explains.

Despite its small size, this festival for serious bird watchers (at least 310 native bird species have been found in the area) generates some not-so-pint-sized revenues for local motels, restaurants and other businesses.



Bishop says festival goers as a group spend an estimated \$150,000 when visiting the city and taking in one of the festival’s many workshops and tours, including one of nearby McNary National Wildlife Refuge. Moreover, the October festival has served to raise the city’s profile, he adds.

“It’s a niche festival,” Bishop says. “It appeals to avid bird watchers and those looking to get into the hobby with some help. But it also generates repeat business for those people introduced to Walla Walla and its many amenities.”

Commercial fishers also generate big economic benefits

Photo: Jon Anderson, WDFW

Recreational fishing may generate big revenues for many small businesses, but so does commercial fishing.

Unlike the recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey that focused exclusively on the economics of recreational fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing, no recent study has tallied the value of the state's commercial fisheries.

Nevertheless, the economic benefits of commercial fisheries are sizeable. And just like recreational fishing, those benefits are felt most in small, rural communities where the loss of a single business can mean a permanent vacancy in a local storefront or plant.

"If we go away, we go away and we don't get replaced," says Pierre Marchand, who operates Jessie's Ilwaco Fish Company, a successful fish-processing firm founded by his family decades ago.

According to the Pacific Fishery Management Council, an estimated \$140 million was paid in 2001 to commercial fishers at Washington ports for catches ranging from chinook salmon and Pacific halibut to shrimp and sea cucumbers. Dungeness crab was the most lucrative for fishers (\$38 million), followed by Pacific oysters (\$19.8 million) and geoducks (\$19.2 million).

If the total value of the catch is calculated as 2.1 times the ex-vessel value of the catch—generally considered a conservative multiplier by economists—the economic impact of the 2001 commercial fishery in Washington state was \$294 million.

This comes as no surprise to many longtime fishers and industry observers, who say the economic benefits of fish landed in Washington by the commercial fleet has a giant ripple effect throughout the state.

"The gillnetter may sell the fish for \$1 a pound, but by the time the restaurant gets it, each 6-ounce piece sells for \$9 a plate or more."

Butch Smith, charter boat operator

"The gillnetter may sell the fish for \$1 a pound, but by the time the restaurant gets it, each 6-ounce piece sells for \$9 a plate or more," says Butch Smith, a former Ilwaco City Councilman who operates a charter boat service that he purchased from his grandfather in 1985.

Mack Funk, manager of the Ilwaco Port, echoes others on the importance of commercial fishing and related businesses to the economies of small towns such as his own. Fishing, despite its contraction in recent years, is still the backbone of Ilwaco's economy, he says, and a single, successful fishery can be very significant.

That's evident, Funk says, in the new sardine fishery approved just three years ago in state waters by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Last year, 11,450 tons of sardines worth an estimated \$1.1 million were landed at Ilwaco. The fishery provided a couple of hundred Ilwaco residents with seasonal jobs at Marchand's fish processing business—no small thing in a town whose total population is 950.

"There are a whole lot of jobs generated from that," says Funk.

But species other than sardines also help keep the paychecks coming for Marchand's workers. A host of species caught in various parts of the Pacific Ocean find their way to Marchand's business each year, delivered by hundreds of commercial fishers.

Marchand says the key for the commercial fishing industry in coming years will be to remain flexible to new opportunities. The industry is ever-changing, he says, and the only certainty is constant change.

"What we do today, we may not do tomorrow, and what we do tomorrow, we may not do the next day," Marchand says.

Divers mean dollars for Hood Canal

Visitors to Mike's Beach Resort, a complex of cabins and RV sites 15 miles north of Hoodport, know some of the area's most spectacular wildlife viewing is out of sight—under the surface of Puget Sound.

They are scuba divers, who stay at the resort and several nearby facilities while they explore the depths of Hood Canal.

"You can see the presence divers are making in this area," says Mike Schultz, whose father opened Mike's Beach Resort 51 years ago. "They are putting money into the community—buying gas and eating in restaurants. It's pretty quiet without them, especially in the off-season."

"They are putting money into the community—buying gas and eating in restaurants. It's pretty quiet without them, especially in the off-season."

Mike Schultz, owner
Mike's Beach Resort

Washington is home to an estimated 10,000 active scuba divers, according to Rick Stratton of Northwest Dive News. In addition, the state routinely draws divers from Oregon and other states and countries, all of whom contribute significantly to businesses on a year-round basis. Unlike other tourism, diving goes on throughout the winter, when weather changes improve water clarity and viewing conditions.

Indeed, after investing an average of \$3,000 on necessary gear, and another \$150 or more on lessons, divers are likely to spend a total of \$150 a day for food, lodging, transportation and services such as air tank refills when they pursue their sport, Stratton estimates.

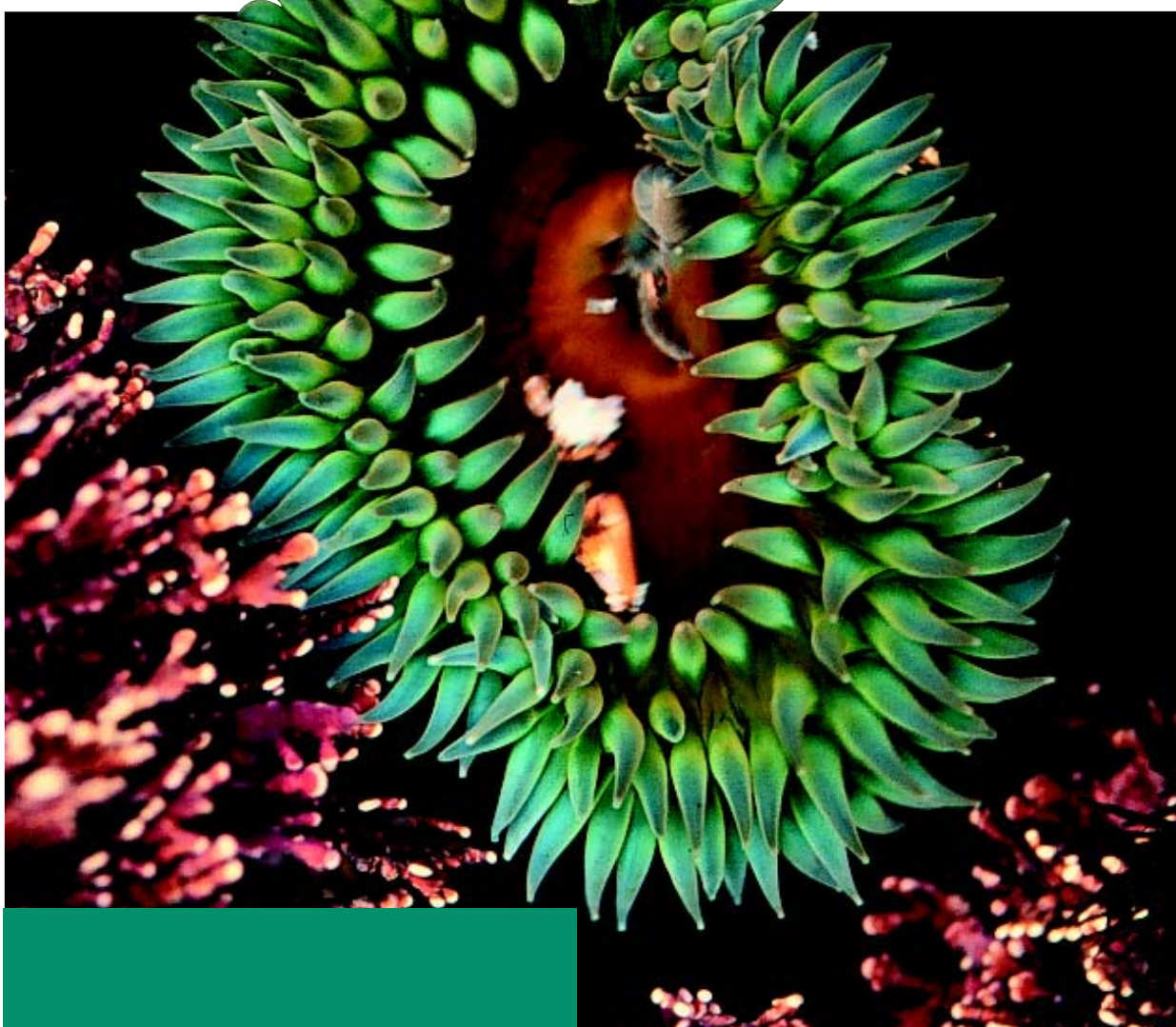
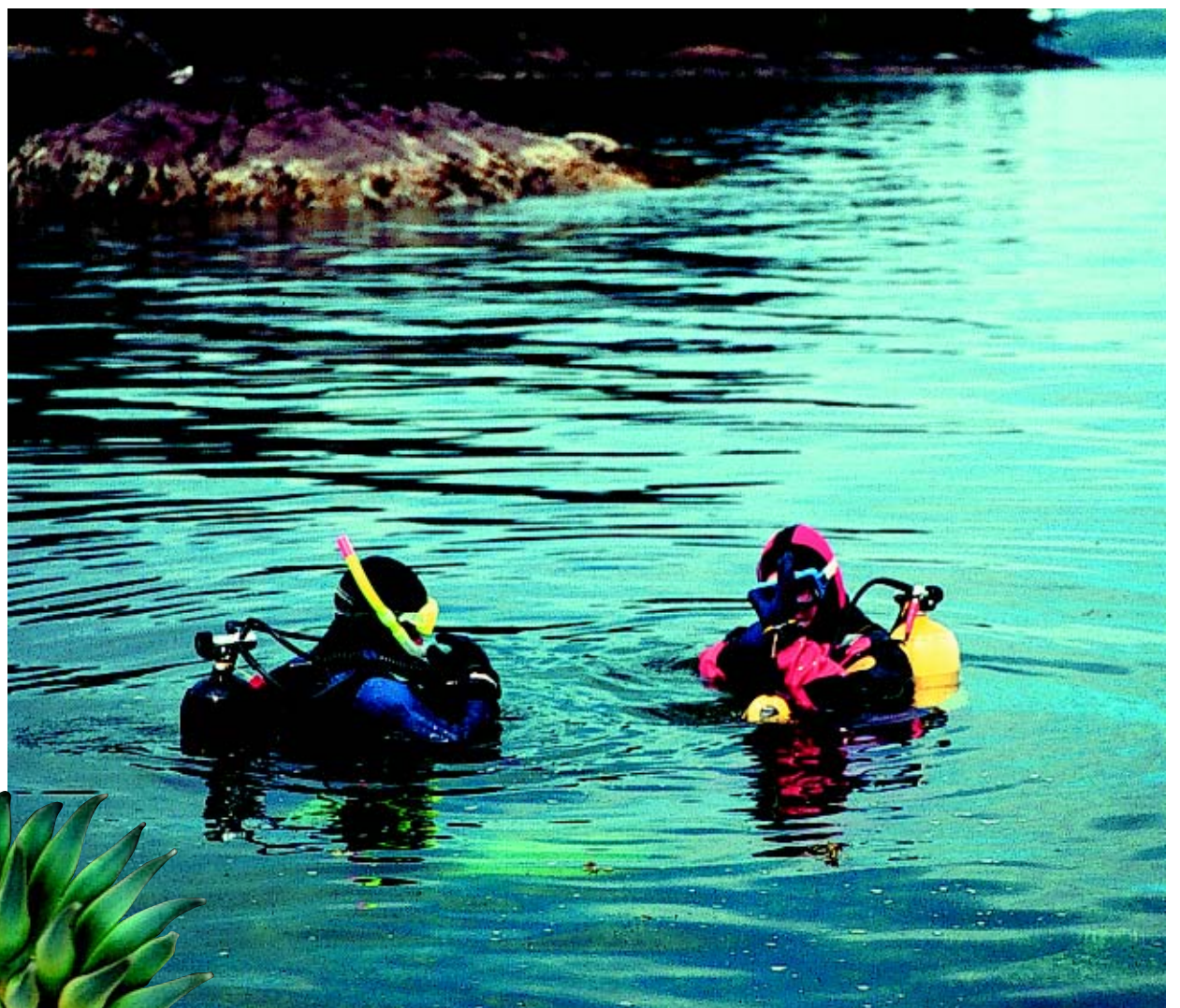
Hood Canal, with its protected water and relatively good winter weather, is a major destination spot for both resident and out-of-state divers seeking a sheltered spot to gain open-water diving practice.

Adding to the appeal of the area is the recent designation of established underwater

marine sanctuaries created by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in parts of Hood Canal and elsewhere in Puget Sound.

The sanctuaries were created to protect dwindling marine fish species, but they offer a side benefit for underwater wildlife watchers as well.

"People appreciate places like the Waketickeh" marine sanctuary on Hood Canal, says Schultz, whose resort accommodates about 20 divers a weekend year-round. "They see bigger fish there and more of them."



The San Juan Islands, Hood Canal and Puget Sound are popular destinations for Washington's 10,000 active scuba divers. Divers, including visitors from Oregon and elsewhere in the Northwest, spend an average \$150 a day per person on dive outings here.

Source: Northwest Dive News

Adding it up

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife marks hatchery salmon and steelhead to distinguish them from wild fish. By 2001, more than 50 selective salmon fisheries had been established, requiring anglers to release any unmarked fish they caught.

Other department management activities that encourage outdoor recreation include:

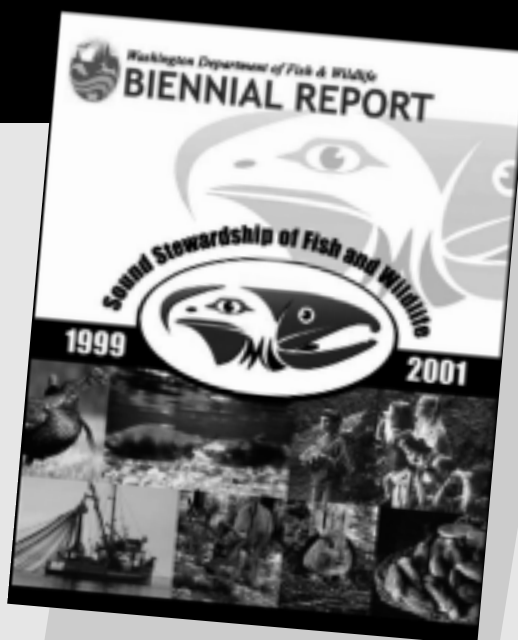
- Managing a statewide hatchery system that produces salmon, steelhead and trout
- Stocking lakes with trout and warmwater species
- Working with local governments and citizen groups to expand wildlife viewing opportunities
- Increasing hunter opportunity by establishing separate seasons for various weapon types
- Structuring the time and place of certain fisheries to maximize economic benefits for communities
- Providing citizen access to 600 water access sites
- Publicizing recreational opportunities through video and print products and outreach and education programs, including hunting and youth fishing clinics
- Promoting recreational activities on Department-owned and managed lands
- Providing bird-hunting opportunities through release of game birds
- Conducting hunter education courses



A fisher uses a de-hooking device to release an unmarked fish.

Other recent publications by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife include the *1999-2001 Biennial Report* and *Partnerships in Science: A New Era in Salmon Recovery*.

To view these publications and others, visit the WDFW website at <http://www.wa.gov/wdfw>. To obtain copies, contact WDFW Public Affairs Office, at (360) 902-2253.



Trout, warmwater fish lure families to waters all over Washington

Jerry Klinkenberg says it's just basic business sense. "When people see or hear about big fish being landed, they come in to buy at least a two-day license and try it themselves," says the owner of "Klinks on the Lake" fishing resort on Williams Lake in southwest Spokane County.

"Big fish draw fishers," he adds. "And so do lots of fish. It's a perception of getting your money's worth."

Klinkenberg has operated a boat rental, recreational vehicle park and restaurant on the 319-acre lake for the past 14 years. And business, he says, has never been better, due in part to the rainbow and cutthroat trout planted in Williams Lake by state fisheries managers.

"The real measure is repeat business," says Klinkenberg, adding that roughly 70 percent of his business comes from the Tri-Cities area. "We've got people returning three, four, even five times throughout the season now because of consistently good fishing."

Mike Meseberg, whose family has operated the MarDon Resort on Potholes Reservoir in the Columbia Basin for the past three decades, says his business also draws fishing enthusiasts from all over. He reports that more than 60 percent of his customers now come from western Washington.

"I see lots of folks who originated inland, moved to Seattle or the coast to find jobs, tried salmon fishing, but then come back here to do the kind of (lake) fishing they learned growing up," he says.

Meseberg and others say tourism is second only to farming in Grant County, and fishing draws many of the tourists, who spend money in Moses Lake, Warden and other communities. State fisheries managers each year plant trout and other game fish in more than 530 waterways statewide, including bass, bluegill, channel catfish, crappie and tiger muskie in dozens of Grant County lakes.

"We've got people returning three, four, even five times throughout the season now because of consistently good fishing."

Jerry Klinkenberg, fishing resort owner

In 2001 the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife stocked state lakes with over 27 million trout and warm-water species.

While fishing is important to many in Grant County, in the Okanogan County town of Conconully, Dave Carpenter says it is vital to his way of life. Carpenter is the owner of the Conconully Lake Resort and a local Chamber of Commerce member.

Carpenter says the community's annual trout derby held each year on the last Saturday of April (the traditional "opening day" of fishing) more than doubles the size of the town. And like his cohorts at Williams Lake and the Potholes Reservoir, many of the anglers hail from miles away.

"We've had over 300 participants coming from Seattle, Canada, even California," Carpenter says. "It's one of our biggest money-making days in the community, and we put a lot into it to make it that way."

"Fishing is our livelihood, so we do everything we can to make sure it is good, not just for the derby, but throughout the season," he adds.





From Kalaloch to Long Beach, clam diggers brighten winter months for business owners

Merchants along the Washington coast know they can count on tourists in summer, a time for beach combing, salmon fishing, kite flying, horseback riding, music festivals and other pursuits.

The rest of the year, however, can be a different story.

“It can get pretty slow during the winter months,” says Leroy Tipton, president of the Grays Harbor Chamber of Commerce. “That’s when motels, restaurants and a lot of other businesses have the hardest time.”

And that’s why the razor clam seasons are so important to coastal communities.

Many business owners say the recreational razor clam season is the one bright spot during the dark days from late fall through early spring. When the season is open, more than 30,000 clam diggers can descend on Washington’s five razor clam beaches in a single day, filling motel rooms and restaurant tables from Long Beach to Kalaloch.

“Razor clam openings give us some busy weekends during the time of year when business is normally slow,” says motel owner Walt Eva, who runs Our Place at the Beach in Long Beach. “They’re a real shot in the arm.”

By Eva’s count, there are at least 25 motels on the Long Beach Peninsula – and an even greater number of restaurants, boutiques, antique stores and other small shops – that

benefit from the razor clam fishery. Dozens of similar businesses cater to clam diggers in towns such as Ocean Shores, Westport, South Bend, Ilwaco and Long Beach.

In all, razor clam diggers made 178,100 trips to harvest 2.4 million razor clams during the 2001-02 season, contributing an estimated \$4.6 million to the coastal economy. State fisheries managers say annual harvest quotas have grown steadily along with the overall abundance of razor clams in recent years.

But clam seasons can be delayed by high levels of domoic acid, a naturally-occurring marine toxin. And that translates into lost

revenues for local businesses. Indeed, cancellation of the first 2002-03 razor clam dig had an immediate effect on coastal businesses.

Our Place at the Beach had 14 cancellations for the weekend the clam dig had been scheduled, while The Breakers, farther north, had 13 and the Shoalwater Restaurant in nearby Seaview had 18.

“It affects all the businesses,” says Ann Kischner, who owns the Shoalwater along with her husband, Tony. “But it’s a good opportunity for us to notice the clam seasons make a difference. We notice when it’s *not* happening.”

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